

Net Neutrality is VITAL to fair discourse

Net Neutrality is essential to free speech, equal opportunity and economic innovation throughout the entire world. Since the FCC removed this basic protection in 2005, the top executives of phone and cable companies have stated their intention to become the Internet's gatekeepers and to discriminate against Web sites that don't pay their added tolls. The idea that ANY limited group of individuals or corporations may be allowed to hold such an astounding amount of control over my access to certain content absolutely sickens me. I will say once more, because I believe it bears repeating for emphasis, that it not only upsets or angers but ABSOLUTELY SICKENS me.

Democracy and Capitalism are all about giving an equal voice to people from all walks of life and giving an equal chance for all individuals to succeed based on the strength of their products and services, NOT based on the amount of start-up dollars they have to put into their business right away.

I believe that the internet is THE SINGLE best thing we have in the entire world right now. What a neutral internet does is allow people from all parts of the world and from all walks of life to learn about each other and from each other with previously unimaginable speed and ease. Keeping access to these communication channels fully unhindered and keeping ALL websites on equal footing with respect to accessibility is clearly and, I believe, undeniably going to benefit the entirety of humanity. Many examples are already apparent, such as the ease with which I can access numerous non-profit charity sites. If internet neutrality were revoked as the communications lobbyists would have it, these charity sites would either become more difficult to access or would have to pay more for easy access channels. Either way, such a decision WOULD without a doubt hurt the amount of donations coming in to those organizations and would even force those organizations to use more of the money they receive to pay for fast access channels rather than putting it toward their charitable causes. This fact alone should be reason enough to laugh in the face of the communications lobbyists. But what about profitable commercial websites? Business start-up success stories like YouTube and MySpace are direct evidence of what humans are capable of when the opportunity is there to present your product or service on an even playing field with major corporations. If internet neutrality were changed in any way, it is virtually guaranteed that start-ups such as YouTube and MySpace would NEVER have existed in the first place, and no more of them will likely be seen in the future. But these are now two great bastions of entrepreneurialism!

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contribute huge sums to our economy. If internet neutrality is altered in any way, it will doom countless such entrepreneurs to virtually guaranteed failure with such a venture. YOU MUST NOT ALLOW THIS TO HAPPEN!!!

This fundamental change would end the open Internet as we know it. It would damage my ability to connect with others, share information and participate in our 21st century democracy and economy. The FCC must ensure that broadband providers do not block, interfere with or discriminate against

any lawful Internet traffic based on its ownership, source or destination. To do so would be akin to making every street in the USA a toll road and charging everyone a different toll for using the same roads depending who the person is, who they work for and what's in their car. It is absolutely ridiculous and ludicrous to me to think that any senator or congressman in our government is even CONSIDERING allowing this change.

The internet AS IT IS NOW in it's current, unbiased and neutral form is more vital to the future of humanity than any new invention has been for hundreds of years. It is more important and will create bigger change than any cotton gin, telephone, printing press or even electricity itself ever did. As important as each of those inventions has been, I believe that never in the entire history of the human species has any single thing contributed more powerfully toward spreading mutual understanding and unity around the world than has the internet.

I can even vouch personally for the effectiveness of a neutral internet in spreading good ideas and mutual understanding among different people. Here is an example: I live in Oregon and have cultivated certain ideas and opinion over time derived from discussions with the people around me. Online, I frequently visit a discussion forum owned and operated by an individual living in New York. This person funds the site entirely with their own money derived from ad revenue on the site. His income from ad placement is just barely paying the website bill. On this site, I frequently debate matters of great gravity with people from all over the world. Right now, I think am currently involved in at least 5 major discussions about everything from Securing Iraq to Capital Punishment to the Downsides of Capitalism, and participating in these discussions are people from the pacific coast, the midwest, the south, the east coast, the UK, Netherlands, Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, Serbia and Mexico. Based on these discussions, I now have a FAR better understanding of world views and rationalizations on these issues than I EVER could've gleaned from speaking with my local neighbors. The point is that if the internet were not neutral as it is today, that discussion forum would NEVER have existed in the first place. i may never have connected with those bright individuals from around the globe and may never have refined my political and religious beliefs as much as i have today were it not for their help.

Now let me stress here that I could quite literally talk for weeks without end about specific instances and general ways in which the current state of the neutral internet has GREATLY benefitted me, my friends, my family, many businesses i've worked with and even a business that i plan to start soon myself, but since this is merely a brief letter, I'll hold myself back. Suffice it to say that without internet neutrality as it is today, I would definitely be less understanding of other world views, I would still be stuck in certain wrong opinions due to a simple lack of information and, on the other hand, i would NOT be about to start up my own business as i am.

Internet Neutrality is so incredibly vital to the world that I cannot even think up the right words to

stress the point enough. Let me just say, then, that net neutrality is AT LEAST as important to me as the Iraq war is right now, if not even a little more so. The outcome of this net neutrality bill and how my representatives vote on it will DEFINITELY be a deciding factor in future elections. I would assume that any senator or congressman who does not grasp the immense importance of keeping the web neutral right now must be so out of touch with reality that he'd just as soon vote for a massive hike in healthcare costs. The very existence of this bill offends me.

When the time comes, please do the right thing and vote to KEEP THE INTERNET NEUTRAL! Our future thanks you.